



What are the odds?

Remembering 2016 and the horse shit leading up to it

S. LaRue – 12/16

**This started off as a seasonal letter to my estranged daughter. I touch base with her when the universe allows it and the mass celebration of an imaginary child being born seemed as good an excuse as any. It took a weird turn, so I scrapped the letter idea. Xmas, my fourth without anything as cheerful as a phone call (poor me, what shall I do) found me watching TED talks and coming dangerously close to a coffee overdose. Got inspired by a couple of them and decided to try and communicate with a relative. My daughter hates me less than the others which is pure conjecture on my part. Anyway, she got tapped to receive a letter. She'll find some reason to be pissed off about it, or so experience tells me.*

1:400,000,000,000,000

That's 400 *Trillion*. Those are the odds of you ever being born. That ought to be enough for anyone to wake up every day without a shred of regret or malice or depression or lack of confidence or any of the negative crap we allow to ruin our lives.

But we let bad ideas rule us.

Brain hemispheres? Ya know about those guys, right? One side logical, stodgy, uptight; the other side wildly creative, open to new ideas, willing to embrace change? The society we've come to accept has caused us to abuse those basics in an odd way.

Seems like the hemispheres have been reduced to *Auto Pilot* instead of reason and an *Emergency Brake* instead of exploration. We're all just **fine** with our decision to roll along doing the same thing we've been doing. I'd say it's an unconscious decision, but it's not.

I mean, if it's quacking and floating in water, I'm willing to call it a duck. It may be a watermelon wearing a feather boa, but for now I'm going with duck:

For 5, 10, 15 (?) years we've had **political correctness** shoved down our throats, which when ya think about it, is the denial of truths about ourselves in favor of a 'group think' kinda deal.

Example:

A bunch of your friends decide to eat only sushi omelets – Uni in particular. They've discussed it at length and convinced themselves there's no other acceptable food. Early in that process you took a powder, politely excused yourself and grabbed a pizza on the way home. You're a big sushi fan, but the toxic brown paste harvested from sea urchins has proven to be a *one time* affair. Ya like omelets too, but not when they're filled salty-Clorox-mud.

You happen to run into your friends at a restaurant.

"Hey! How are you guys?"

"Fine."

You order a BLT on sourdough. They quickly finish up and wait outside in the parking lot. When you exit they hack you into easily disposable chunks with razor sharp machetes. Other restaurant patrons see the carnage as they leave.

"What happened here?"

"That Omelet Denier had the nerve to disagree with us so we killed her."

"OH! My goodness! Ewww. Looks like she may have been artistic or something – soooo last week!!

You brave young women have a nice day – and remember – all men are rapists, so keep those big knives at the ready."

"America!"

It may have been your choice to refer to them as "guys" that triggered their outrage, but for political impact they chose to make it about Vomit Omelets. One decision, a single thought, action, spoken word that doesn't align perfectly, **and I mean perfectly** with *ANY group that has more members than YOURS* and it's well within their rights to kill you.

And **"Taa-Daa!!!"** Donald Trump is president.

I'm not okay with that. Not the Trump deal (I'm of the opinion we deserve him), I'm talkin' 'bout the murdering part.

I prefer to exist in a place where it's admirable to announce your intention to become a cheerleader, in a world of astronauts, doctors and cops. There's room for fun in that space. Room to grow, smile, frivolity is allowed, you can be passionate about what it is you've chosen to do without dodging airborne machete's on your way to Pom-Pom class.

The alternative is to goose-step along with the rest of the herd. You know, don't rock the boat. The most important edict of the herd? *Don't talk about anything that matters* in an open and honest way. If you say what you mean instead of hiding it, someone might get the upper hand, use what you've said against you in some chicken-shit way. You must ignore the reasoning hemisphere of your brain (your *Auto Pilot*) in favor of the *Emergency Brake*. If you can bring yourself to do that, you accept the notion of **fine** as something other than a cop-out.

I've been wrong before, and am getting better at admitting it. When you swallow that pill allowing you to say, *"Yup. I fucked that up REEL gud!"* your reward for being honest has become ZERO. The annoying part is, I don't own my shit so others will see me in a brighter light – I own my shit because it makes me feel better about myself. But try explaining that to my noggin chimp – he expects to be

rewarded for doing what is **obviously the right thing**. Ya just don't see it happen very often – you'd think it would raise an eyebrow if only for the novelty of it, like a pig ridin' a bike.

Setting things straight is it's own reward, but these days you have to push yourself a little harder. It's like admitting some trespass against someone, in essence sorta asking them to forgive you, and them shouting to the world, “**Ah-HA! SEE? I TOLD YOU HE WAS AN ASSHOLE!**”

The total effect makes it harder to do the right thing when your next opportunity arises. If you do, somehow you wind up LESS of a person:

You notify people who've been directly effected by your improper handling of a situation. If those you inform see you as having value, it may soften their view concerning the mistake you made, the one you just owned, meaning you plan to change your behavior so it won't happen again.

Or maybe they won't, who knows? Honestly? I can't make heads or tails out of it most of the time. The only constant that's apparent is your being killed for having a BLT and that's just **fine** with the world. *Someone was offended by it – how dare you?*

It's a concept many **claim to embrace** but you never see them act on it. I think it's because admitting you were wrong causes others to see you as weak. Maybe saying you're less than perfect is the sign of being without a group to back you up, one assuring you it's **fine** to fuck someone over and waltz away with impunity.

It's a case of the warrior laying down his sword in favor of cowardice. Behind him the city is being sacked by the Mongol Hoard and it's just **fine** by our once noble warrior.

Nossir. I don't give a fuck, not one, when people are offended when I cross *acceptable behavior boundaries* while living in a society based on greed and lies. Dollar signs are what matters most in this shit-hole and I'm gonna take a pass on that batch of Kool-Aid, if it's all the same to you – the recipe calls for more HATE than I'm comfortable with.

I'm not sacrificing babies down at the Walmart, not stealing from my aging parents just because they're no longer among those able to grasp the concept of DNA as not being something a person controls. I've decided, much too late, to be my own person, or to give it a shot anyway. Dollar signs are all well and good, that I don't worship them has come as a shock to many – I got indoor plumbing, enough food to get by and some way to get around, I'm good, sans the occasional pulmonary embolism – I got that shit covered too and as it's turned out, I heal up much faster when I'm not sweating about how to pay for the privilege.

The boat that abhors being rocked needs to be shown it's new home at the bottom of the ocean.

But there's a catch – offering **fine** as a definition of how you're getting along in the world is *pure genius* in a kinda fucked up way. You're **fine!** You don't have to do anything about *anything*. You've convinced yourself there's absolutely nothing wrong – how is that a bad thing?

For me, an aging geezer, it means I've accepted my loose fitting jeans, I've made peace with my numerous faults and will not be making any effort toward improving myself. Accepting things that STOP ME from having what I want in my world, things that KILL real relationships with real people that genuinely care about each other, people concerning themselves with what's best for our species

instead of their bottom line, no matter what Karl Rove is selling, indicates I've given up on my dreams, would mean I've given up on myself.

Fine is almost always bullshit. *Sometimes I'm amazing, others, not so much.* When the sun goes down and there's a moment for reflection, one in which you're honest with yourself, in my case anyway, there is PLENTY of room for improvement.

I've exerted a lot of effort overcoming what I was upon leaving home – clawing my way out of that part of hell was no picnic. I've shed some pretty nasty aspects of my approach recently and they've almost all backfired. Doesn't mean I'm necessarily doing it all wrong, it just means there's a huge possibility I'm behind the curve – there's also a chance I'm ahead of the curve in a way that makes the herd uncomfortable. How would I know? Things are changing in me and anything is better than what I was yesterday.

Being honest with yourself is simple, but it isn't easy. The simplicity makes it difficult: *If it's so freakin' simple, why bother? Fine is **FINE** – why fix it if it isn't broken?*

Got time for a story? It's short, I promise (just like I promised myself this was going to be a one page letter).

Once I was speaking with Sonny-Jim about doing the dishes while he stood in defiance of the chore he'd agreed to do. While we were disagreeing about the simplicity of the task, I was doing the dishes (pre-dishwasher era). He wasn't taller than me yet, so he was like 3yo or something. He was so passionate about refusing to keep his word, he didn't notice I'd done the dishes while we talked.

From start to finish was about 10 minutes. I made the referee 'time out' signal and waved my arm over the now-sparsely-populated dish rack. He looked kinda sheepish and we agreed to resume the conversation after dinner, when it would once again be time for him to do the dishes.

So does that mean **I was wrong** for asking him to keep his word? Does it mean **he was wrong** for not keeping his word? *The dishes got done*, which was the focus of the situation, so does that mean I was really the dishwasher and was trying to oppress him into being my slave? He'd agreed to do the dishes and I hadn't taken a belt to him as encouragement. It was allowance driven, and I don't mean money. I mean allowances around whether he was going to spend 15 hours playing video games that day or 14 and a half. I think it probably means **I was the dishwasher all along**. Change is difficult and he was only 3, making it more so. I say we cut him a break.

Oh fuck. There it is.

I am so **BUSTED!**

I finally know why I'm **livin' it up in Tucson**.

That paragraph up there says it ALL.

The moment I finished writing it, it grabbed my ear and pulled me closer to the screen, kinda bumped my head against the glass a couple of times.

- I'll wash the dishes just to get the job done.
- I'll let someone damage my car, the one they promised not to drive, wait years for them to repair it, knowing they never will.

- I put off getting a divorce for SEVEN FUCKING YEARS so what's-her-name wouldn't be stressed beyond her limit. I was eventually seen as so insignificant, she thought it would be a fun project to steal my identity, right in front of god and everybody. Even AFTER that, I was the one that helped her get back from New Orleans – no one else cared that she was stranded and alone. Said she was broke but the next time I saw her, she was driving a classic Mustang, one with the Police Chase Vehicle options package, and I said nothing.

- Weakness must ooze from my pores, something Scott Nary (of Peak Property Management fame) smelled in the air and decided to act on by insuring I was without transportation when, purely to satisfy his cruelty fetish, he illegally had my car towed. He went out of his way to make sure I was unable to access my mail for two months. I had no means of getting my meds, unable to comply with scheduled doctor appointments, was hospitalized with some Strepto-Pneumonia deal due to the stress of raw, mindless hatred and eventually made homeless after a mock trial wherein I spoke three words (Yes. Your. Honor.), and was waved off.

- I am so incredibly weak a stranger thinks it's okay to assume ownership of my house by attaching 30 words to a SIXTEEN YEAR OLD **INVALID** PIECE OF PAPER,

and what do I do about all that?

Not much.

“Someone may be inconvenienced. Someone might become upset, or think less of me, or stop talking to me, or, or, or...”

So when it's said that my current situation is attributable to my actions and mine alone? **It's true.**

Dang, that one stings. But it's pretty funny. Funnier if I were talking about someone besides myself, but still, fucking hilarious.

It's all my fault.

There it is, in writing for ya, with a handy guide above, showing how I finally found common ground with you people. Thank you for continually insisting I'm an idiot. How could I have been so blind as to think I wasn't at fault?

This was the perfect way to spend xmas day. Plus, it snowed in Tucson last night – pretty rare – Snow and Introspection go together like the Beatles and Communism. Maybe there is a god after all?

JK!

Happy New Year!

Big love,

Steven